

17 May 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Career Development Officer,


SUBJECT : Survey of Analysts' Language Capability and
Area Familiarity

1. Dr. Stevens has requested a survey to determine the language proficiency and first-hand country familiarity of area analysts in the Intelligence Directorate. The same information is also requested for those analysts with functional assignments where language capability is relevant to their substantive responsibility--e.g., Russian for analysts on the Soviet economy or on Soviet S&T.

2. Using the attached format, please provide data only for those analysts in your Office who qualify under the following guidelines:

- Reading proficiency is the ability to read publications or, if relevant, technical journals in the language and analyze content.
- Speaking proficiency is the ability to converse freely in the area or country using only the local language.
- Language(s) applicable only to the analyst's current assignment should be considered.

3. It is requested your report be submitted to the DDI Administrative Staff by cob 10 June 1977.


DDI Career Development Officer

Attachment:
As stated

Number of Qualifying Analysts: _____Number of Qualifying Analysts: _____

Name of Qualifying Analyst	Area/Country or Functional Assignment	Name of Language	Language Proficiency Reading Speaking (Check which is applicable)		Travel to Area (Total time and year of last visit)

STAT

Approved For Release 2004/05/12 : CIA-RDP83-00156R001000060064-1

Next 12 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Approved For Release 2004/05/12 : CIA-RDP83-00156R001000060064-1

Annex 2

Data on Language Competence in NFAC
as Reflected by the 1978 Professional Skills Inventory

AT Of the respondents to the questionnaire, 38 percent indicated they had no language ability either in reading, understanding or speaking.* The statistics and analysis that follow are restricted to NFAC's pool of professionals who are able to read a foreign language--the most important language skill given NFAC's mission and responsibilities.

Each respondent was asked to rank his/her ability to read a foreign language on the basis of three defined skill levels (see Tab A). For the purpose of the analysis that follows, these skill levels have been labeled as "high", "good" and "slight". There is feeling among linguists which is supported by the data from the questionnaire--but with one exception to be discussed later--that only a "slight" knowledge of a foreign language is of little assistance to a production analyst in NFAC. Table 1 which follows is the number of respondents in NFAC who reported a "high" reading ability in a foreign language.

Table 1

NFAC Professionals with a "High" Ability
to Read a Foreign Language

<u>Language</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>Number</u>
French	45	Portuguese	3	Danish	1
Russian	45	Norwegian	2	Dutch	1
Spanish	36	Polish	2	Swedish	1
German	31	Romanian	2	Indonesian	1
Chinese	4	Vietnamese	2	Japanese	1
Italian	4	Czech/Slovak	1	Ukrainian	1

TOTAL - 183

*Seventy-five respondents indicated they were currently taking foreign language courses.

The 183 high ability responses include considerable multiple counting in the preceding table; individuals with high linguistic skills in one language tend to have similar skills in a second language. What can be stated with certainty is that less than 12 percent of all respondents to the questionnaire claimed a high reading ability in a foreign language. In addition, of the 39 languages listed in the questionnaire, NFAC professionals reported a high reading ability in only 18 of them.

NFAC shows up better when it comes to languages for which analysts can claim a good reading ability. The data are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

NFAC Professionals with a "Good" Ability
to Read a Foreign Language

<u>Language</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>Number</u>
French	176	Japanese	4	Hindi	1
Spanish	87	Polish	4	Indonesian	1
Russian	85	Serbo-Croatian	4	Norwegian	1
German	63	Albanian	1	Persian	1
Chinese	18	Czech/Slovak	1	Swahili	1
Italian	14	Danish	1	Swedish	1
Portuguese	12	Finnish	1	Ukrainian	1
Arabic	4	Greek	1	Vietnamese	1

TOTAL - 484

There is probably considerably more multiple counting in the table above than in Table 1, because it takes less time, persistence and skill to acquire a good reading ability on one or more foreign languages than a level of skill that approaches native proficiency. The number of responses jumps from 183 to 484, but the largest increases occur in French, Spanish, Russian and German, the languages that NFAC professionals have a good hold on. The additional languages that occur at the good level which were not on the high level (Table 1) are Albanian, Arabic, Greek, Hindi, Persian, Serbo-Croatian and Swahili. For the above seven languages that are added by easing the criterion from high to good, there were a total of 15 additional responses.

Overall the language data show that NFAC is richly endowed in those languages that have received long-term emphasis in the US academic community: French, Spanish, and to a lesser extent, German. The relative high ranking of Russian is probably the result of two factors--more emphasis on Russian in academic circles and the high intelligence value of that language which has led to NFAC giving hiring priority to applicants with that skill and emphasizing the value of Russian language training once analysts are hired and assigned to do research on the USSR.

On the other hand, it is hard to find evidence from the questionnaire that shows that NFAC is highly endowed in rarer languages so that analysts could be shifted from one crisis area to another to meet changing world conditions. As shown in Table 1, nobody claimed a "high" in Greek; only six people claimed they can read Turkish, all at the "slight" level. Only one person claims an ability to read Bulgarian at a "slight" level. Only three can read Korean--again at a "slight" level.

It can be argued that large numbers of linguists are not necessary in some positions. The analyst with a "good" ability to read (also speak and understand) Hindi when quizzed, claimed she doesn't need it, because the British English language mentality still holds sway in India. NFAC has one person with a "high" language ability in Indonesian, another with a "good" ability and two with a "slight" ability. This would seem to be more than enough to meet present needs or to meet future requirements, if the priority of Indonesia increases in future years. But on the other hand, all may have retired or resigned by then. Furthermore the above argumentation can be countered by suggesting that other than Russian and perhaps Chinese, there doesn't seem to have been any systematic manner in which language training has been applied and the skills acquired.

The data above present a picture of the language skills available in NFAC. A more important question is whether these skills are being rationally used in NFAC. Are those professionals in NFAC with a high or good language reading skill assigned to positions where these skills can be used? A matching exercise was done in which an analyst's primary country responsibilities were paired against his or her language skills. There are obvious limitations to the methodology that was used. An analyst may have identified "The Common Market" as his primary responsibility rather than an individual country. If he or she can read German well, it is hard to judge what use is being made of German in his or her current assignment. Another analyst with a "high" Russian language ability lists China as his primary country responsibility. He or she may or may not be using Russian to look at Sino-Soviet relations from a particular perspective. For the reasons mentioned--and others also--the data presented in Table 3 should be

considered a minimum matching exercise. It shows a high correlation between relatively scarce languages such as Czech and the most important ones (Russian and Chinese) from an intelligence viewpoint and the analyst's current assignment. For both Russian and Chinese, analysts with these skills are for the most part assigned to research on the USSR and China. This is true for all the major offices of NFAC. All four analysts with an ability to read Arabic indicated country responsibilities where it would appear they could use that language--Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and the Sudan. The two analysts who have a good proficiency in reading Polish work on Poland, one in OCR and one in ORPA.

For those languages in abundance in NFAC--French and German--only a small percentage of those with the skill are in a position to use it. In almost all components, the more common languages are being used in the limited number of assignments that can make use of them.

Another way of looking at whether languages are being used correctly in NFAC is to disregard the organizational approach of Table 3 and compare political, military and economic analysts with their country responsibilities and their language skills. This was done. In many instances the results were inconclusive, because no primary country of responsibility was indicated. The data do show that all the political analysts with a high Russian language ability are working on the USSR*. The three political analysts with high Chinese language ability are assigned to research on China. One analyst with high competence in German indicated his primary responsibility was the USSR. Political analysts with high competence in Spanish listed primary country responsibilities of Cuba and Argentina. Those with a high competence in French listed Spain, Iran, China and France. One ORPA analyst with a high competence in Norwegian listed his primary responsibility as Spain, but this same individual was highly qualified in French.

For economists there was less agreement between country responsibility and a high language ability. The data were more limited, however, so that few conclusions can be made. An OGCR analyst high in Spanish was assigned to research on Mexico. Following a relationship mentioned earlier, the analyst high in Russian listed his primary responsibility as the USSR.

Eight military analysts who ranked themselves high in Russian all worked on the USSR, except one who listed Peru as his primary responsibility. Unlike the data on political analysts, however, there were numerous other military analysts with highs in French, German and

*Except the one mentioned previously working on China.

Table 3

Relationship Between Country of Primary Responsibility
and Foreign Language Reading Ability

	OCR		OER		OGCR		ORPA		OSI		OSR		OWI	
	Total Number*	Language Related**	Total Number	Language Related	Total Number	Language Related	Total Number	Language Related	Total Number	Language Related	Total Number	Language Related	Total Number	Language Related
French	27	23	25	1	8	2	40	3	8	0	25	0	7	0
German	6	1	13	1	5	0	12	1	8	0	9	1	3	0
Italian	2	1	4	0	1	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Portuguese	1	0	3	1	2	2	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Spanish	15	5	13	4	12	5	19	7	5	0	15	0	6	0
Norwegian	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Swedish	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Czech/Slovak	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Polish	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Romanian	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Serbo-Croatian	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Russian	13	10	25	19	11	10	20	16	6	5	24	21	5	5
Ukrainian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Arabic	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Greek	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hindi	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Persian	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chinese	1	1	6	5	0	0	9	9	2	1	2	1	0	0
Japanese	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Indonesian	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vietnamese	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

*This column reports the total number of individuals who indicated a "high" or "good" level of competency in each language listed and also indicated that they had a primary country responsibility. For that reason the numbers in this table need not agree with other tabulations of language skills presented elsewhere.

**If an analyst could read Portuguese and was working on Brazil, his or her assignment was considered to be "language related." In a few hazier instances there was also considered to be a match between language and country assignment, for example, an analyst with high Japanese language ability was doing research on China. Such a language skill would permit an analyst to delve into some dimensions of Sino-Japanese relations to a greater extent than an analyst without Japanese.

Spanish who listed their primary responsibility as the USSR. Realize that this was a more rigid matching exercise than used in Table 3. That table included both high and good. This comparison supports the earlier conclusion that high language skills in Russian and Chinese are being properly used for both political, economic and military analysts. The data tend to suggest that more military analysts working on the USSR could be trained in Russian.

While the earlier comparison was between those with a high language ability, a topical responsibility and a primary country responsibility, we also wanted to determine if there was any relationship between those analysts who indicated a slight ability and their country assignment. As was expected, there was little relationship between a slight language ability and primary country assignment. One exception was that a fair number of OSR military analysts with a slight Russian ability were assigned to the USSR. What came first is what can't be determined. It may well be a case of analysts with no formal training in Russian picking up from their colleagues highly trained in Russian a usable fluence in that language regardless of how slight.

The survey was concerned with how NFAC professionals view the importance of their language skills--both in terms of their current assignment and past assignments. The results of these questions are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Value of Language to Job

	<u>Present Assignment</u>		<u>All Past Assignments</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Virtually a job prerequisite*	28	3.0	46	6.8
Seriously handicapped without it	98	10.1	77	11.4
Useful, but could do without	322	33.4	237	35.0
Not related to present assignment	<u>515</u>	<u>53.5</u>	<u>318</u>	<u>46.8</u>
	978	100.0	678	100.0

*The definitions are slightly compressed in this tabulation. See items 40 and 41 for the original wording.

Slightly over 13 percent of all respondents indicated that their language skill was a prerequisite or that they would be seriously handicapped without it in their current assignment. As would be expected, a larger percentage--slightly over 18 percent--valued their foreign language proficiency more highly when all of their past assignments were considered. Considering either their present or past assignments, about a third of all respondents said their language skill was "...useful, but the quality and quantity of my work would not have suffered significantly without it." This seems a surprisingly high percentage which resulted in additional analysis of the data. Given below is the response of all NFAC professionals of the value of being able to read Russian and Chinese in their present assignment.

The importance of an ability to read Russian is ranked much higher than the aggregative data--which is applied to all languages--presented above. As appears reasonable, the data suggest that the greater an analyst's competency in a language, the more the language is considered an asset on the job.* As shown in Table 5 below, 54 percent of those with a high Russian language reading ability felt their language skill was either virtually a job prerequisite, or they would be seriously handicapped without it. Another 50 of the 222 respondents with only a slight Russian reading ability felt the same way. It would appear that there can be a relatively quick payoff in teaching analysts even a slight Russian reading competence. The data also show that only nine of the 68 respondents who claimed a high Russian language ability stated that their skill was unrelated to their present or past NFAC assignments.

*We also checked the responses of political, economic and military analysts with a high language competence in any language. Their responses also show that analysts with a high language skill rate it highly as a means of getting quicker access to foreign language material and being able to broaden the depth of their research and analysis by being able to think in the foreign language. Understandably, those without a high skill in a foreign language tend to convince themselves that they get along almost as well without it.

Table 5

Value of Russian Language to Job

Russian Reading Proficiency	Slight		Good		High	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Virtually a job prerequisite	8	3.6	17	12.6	17	25.0
Seriously handicapped without it	42	18.9	39	28.8	20	29.4
Useful, but could do without	102	46.0	53	39.2	22	32.4
Not related to present or past assignments	70	31.5	26	19.4	9	13.2
TOTAL	222	100.0	135	100.0	68	100.0

There are fewer analysts with the ability to read Chinese, and the conclusions drawn from the data need to be much more tentative. A slight Chinese reading ability seems to be of little value. A high ability to read Chinese is more important, but five of the seven with such ability said their language was useful, but they could do without it or it was not related to present or past assignments. Whether these results stem from the small size of the sample, the unavailability of productive Chinese source materials, or the specialized assignments of the analysts is impossible to determine at this time. A summary of the data is presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Value of Chinese Language to Job

Chinese Reading Proficiency	Slight		Good		High	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Virtually a job prerequisite	0	0	2	6.6	1	14.3
Seriously handicapped without it	4	7.4	5	16.7	1	14.3
Useful, but could do without it	33	61.1	14	46.7	4	57.1
Not related to present or past assignments	17	31.5	9	30.0	1	14.3
TOTAL	54	100.0	30	100.0	7	100.0

Further information about how an NFAC professional uses his or her language skills is given in Table 7. This applies to all language, not just Russian and Chinese.

Table 7

Use of Language in Assignments

Having a language skill in my present or past assignments has permitted me to:	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Have quicker access to information not immediately available in English				
Identify items for <input type="checkbox"/> translation				
Broaden depth of analysis--think and analyze in a foreign language				
Have a real advantage in some other way than above				

The data show that about one-fifth of NFAC analysts are skilled enough in one or more foreign languages to do their research as if they were a native--at least in terms of language. Clearly more than half of those who responded imply that their competence is great enough to exploit foreign material adequately for their own purposes as soon as it becomes physically available to them. Almost one-half indicate a lesser degree of competency, yet still an important one. This is the ability to selectively screen and select material for translation by professional linguists. In addition, more than one-third use their language skills in numerous other ways--reading maps, making use of indexes, using it when traveling abroad and so forth. As with some other subjects discussed above, this one is well-suited to further analysis.

One question in the survey was concerned with how an NFAC professional had acquired his or her language skills (Item 38). A second question (Item 40) was related to the importance of the foreign language in an analyst's job performance. The two questions were run against each other, language by language, for all NFAC professionals with a high reading skill in one language or more. Did those with a higher reading skill in French, Russian or Chinese rate this skill relatively more importantly than the average NFAC professional with a high, good or slight skill, and if so, how did he obtain that skill--in college or through foreign residency or by some other means?

The conclusions that can be drawn from the following analysis are limited, because the numbers are small and the choices numerous. Nevertheless, some things do emerge that bear on language skills within NFAC.

Of the 32 professionals who reported a high skill level in French, 13 had acquired it in high school and college, while 12 reported foreign residency as the most important influence in the acquisition of their language skill. Of the 32, six claimed that their language skill was almost a job prerequisite, or they would be seriously handicapped without it. The pattern for Spanish was virtually the same.

Those with high German skills, again reading only, acquired the skills more abroad than in college--12 of a total of 24. Eight of the 24 reported that their German reading skill was a job prerequisite or that they would be seriously handicapped without it.

Forty NFAC professionals claimed a high level of ability in reading Russian. In this case there was a wider distribution of how this skill had been acquired (see Table 8 below).

Table 8

Most Important Influence in Acquiring
a "High" Level of Russian Reading Ability

<u>Primary Influence</u>	<u>Number of Professionals</u>
High school and college	12
Used in the home	1
Foreign residence	4
Military or FSI	10
CIA training	9
Other	<u>4</u>
	40

Of those with a high reading skill in Russian, 23 (almost ☐ percent) reported that it was almost a prerequisite or that they would be seriously handicapped without it. Only five professionals reported that their Russian reading skill was unrelated to their job.

ST

Of four professionals in NFAC who reported a high reading ability in Chinese, two reported college as the most important influence in its acquisition, and foreign residency was reported as being the most important influence for the other two. As indicated earlier, only one analyst reported that he would be handicapped without it, two felt it was useful and one reported that it was unrelated to his job. It is noteworthy that, except for Russian, CIA training was cited by very few analysts as being the major influence on their acquiring a high language fluency.